

INTRODUCTION OF THE AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS AND WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill to amend the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act. The legislation would simply extend the filing fee exemption to all elementary and secondary schools.

The American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act increased the number of H1-B visas available over a series of years. This legislation also called for a \$500 fee to be paid by the employer to file their H1-B visa application. However, this act also contained a provision that exempted institutes of higher education, non-profit research groups, and governmental research institutes from paying the filing fee. The exemption was afforded to these groups to help offset the cost of trying to employ talented workers from abroad.

I represent part of Houston, Texas. Back home my wife is an algebra teacher in Aldine High School. She recently told me of their teacher recruiting efforts. The Aldine Independent School District is much like other district on or near the border. These school districts are constantly searching for talented, experienced teachers for our children. School districts on or near the border will even try to recruit teachers from abroad, who are experienced, bilingual, and who would be a great addition to any school's staff.

The legislation I just introduced would extend the filing fee exemption to all of our schools and will give them the opportunity to recruit the most educated, talented, and experienced teachers for our students. By offsetting the cost of the application, our elementary and secondary schools could look to find the best teachers or specialists, and they could use the \$500 filing fee to provide other education services for our schools.

A TRIBUTE TO ELVA AND JOSEPH RIBAUDO

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special couple Elva and Joseph Ribaud. Elva and Joseph's love for each other, their community, and children exemplify the old-fashioned values this country was founded on. Recently they celebrated a milestone few couples reach. Elva and Joseph Ribaud celebrated fifty years of marriage.

To mark the milestone, a party was recently held in Fresno, California, where over 60 people turned out to honor this wonderful couple. Among the guests were their two beautiful children and their four adorable grandchildren.

In 1952, three years after getting married, the young couple moved into their first house. They still live in that house 47 years later. As this century come to a close they have no plans of moving out of their beloved home. Their devotion to this home, neighborhood, and community is unequalled.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring Elva and Joseph Ribaud. Their steadfast love, their devotion to their community, neighborhood and home and their love of children are qualities every American should strive to duplicate.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ELOY AGUILAR

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the great public service career of one San Antonian. Over the past 25 years, Mr. Eloy Aguilar has served the constituents of the 20th district of Texas as district director for my predecessor and father, Henry B. Gonzalez.

Twenty-five years ago, Eloy began his career of service and over the years he has shown great dedication and commitment to the constituents of the 20th district and all the people of San Antonio. There have been countless changes since he began his career in 1974, but the one thing that has not changed is Eloy's dedication. He has devoted many hours, evenings and weekends to the work of the people. Though he had served the community of San Antonio for a quarter of a century and was ready for retirement, Eloy continued his role as district director for me during the transition from my father's lengthy term through the first months of my own.

In just a few days, Eloy will enter retirement. I take this opportunity to thank him for his tireless service to the constituents of the 20th district and to the Gonzalez family. His presence will be greatly missed. Eloy, we wish you all the best.

GUILLIAN-BARRE SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY, MAY 1, 1999

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share information about Guillian-Barre Syndrome Day on Saturday, May 1, 1999.

"GBS Awareness Day" is an effort to help educate the public and to focus attention on Guillian-Barre Syndrome. GBS is an inflammatory disorder of the peripheral nerves. It is characterized by the rapid onset of weakness and often, paralysis of the legs, arms, breathing muscles, and face. Although most people recover, this can take months, and some have long-term disabilities. It is important to note that GBS can develop in any person at any age, regardless of gender or ethnic background.

Although a great number of cases developed from the 1976 swine flu vaccine, almost 50 percent occur shortly after a viral infection such as a sore throat or diarrhea. This should bring home how susceptible we all are to this baffling disorder which is unpredictable and as of yet, its cause is unknown.

In 1980, in response to the growing number of cases, Robert and Estelle Benson founded the Guillian-Barre Syndrome Foundation Inter-

national. The foundation has developed 130 chapters to help serve the needs of patients, families, and friends while at the same time raise money to fund medical research. The foundation is proud to have on its medical advisory board some of the world's leading experts on GBS, as well as physicians who themselves have the disorder.

One of GBS Foundation cofounders, Mr. Ralph Neas, has played a vital role in bringing awareness to the community through his work at the local Montgomery County Chapter. It is the mission of those who have been affected by this sometimes devastating disease to assure that everyone is aware of the established support system and to better educate the community on the facts and symptoms of Guillian-Barre Syndrome.

I congratulate the foundation on their efforts and wish them great success in their mission.

IN HONOR OF RICARDO DIAZ AND BOBBI MARSELLS

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to share with my colleagues my appreciation and regard for Mr. Ricardo Diaz and Ms. Bobbi Marsells, of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee. Today, Monday, April 26, 1999, the residents of Milwaukee's Hillside Public Housing Development are honoring Ricardo and Bobbi for their work to revitalize Hillside.

Ask anyone familiar with HUD's HOPE VI public housing revitalization program, and they'll tell you that Hillside's transformation wasn't just another 'revitalization'; it was more like a resurrection. In 1993, most of the residents in Hillside lived below the poverty line and had no earned income at all, the facilities were ugly and outmoded, the neighborhood was plagued with drugs and crime, and most public housing applicants preferred to wait longer for help than to move there. Today, earned income is way up, poverty and crime are way down, the design and appearance of the buildings and neighborhood are contemporary, attractive, and functional, and Hillside has a waiting list of eager would-be residents.

Hillside is special not just for Milwaukee, but as an example for the national of what public housing can be. Hillside shows us that revitalization means more than just, safe, structurally sound, and comfortable buildings. Hillside demonstrates that co-locating supportive services offered in partnership with committed, community-based organizations can help public housing residents to work their way out of poverty. Hillside also reminds us that removing design barriers like dead-end streets and tree-line screens, and actually integrating a public housing development into the surrounding neighborhood, can reduce crime and raise the quality of life for the residents of the development.

Many people contributed to Hillside's transformation, but the indispensable element, the driving force that made it happen, was the team of Ricardo Diaz and Bobbi Marsells. Ricardo and Bobbi helped political leaders convince HUD that the revitalization strategy was sound and they built and energized a coalition

of local supporters. As a result, Milwaukee won a \$47.5 million HOPE VI award that made Hillside's remarkable transformation possible. They also took a very personal and active role in the implementation of Hillside's HOPE VI project, and the end result is a reflection of their commitment and vision.

Ricardo and Bobbi were not content to stop at Hillside. They worked tirelessly over the past few years to help secure a \$34 million HOPE VI grant to revitalize the Parklawn Public Housing Development. Today, they are planning Parklawn's transformation, and I am confident that a few years from now, Parklawn will reflect the same innovative vision that Hillside represents today.

Mr. Speaker, very few people can look back on a body of work and say that they helped change a whole community and set a new standard for the nation. Fewer people still can say that they're planning to do it again. Because of their determination, their devotion, their ingenuity, their charm, and their very, very hard work, Ricardo Diaz and Bobbi Marsells are among the those few. On behalf of the people of Milwaukee, I thank them for their efforts to make our city a better place to live.

IN HONOR OF THE TENTH ANNI-
VERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE
SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the sister city relationship between Yuba City, CA, an agricultural community which I represent, and Fujishiro, located in the Ibaraki Prefecture of Japan. Over the course of the last ten years, this relationship has allowed for educational, cultural, industrial, community and governmental exchanges which have benefitted the residents of both cities.

In July of 1989, a delegation from Fujishiro came to Yuba City and a declaration of intent to enter a sister city agreement was completed. Other visits ensued, culminating in a signing ceremony in Yuba City in November 1989. In February 1990, a Yuba City delegation traveled to Fujishiro for a similar joint signing. In the ensuing 10 years, there have been several exchange delegations of adults and students.

Sutter County Supervisor Dennis Nelson, President of the Sister City Association, has encouraged the relationship with Fujishiro in order to provide the citizens of both cities with a better understanding of each other through exchanges which enhance the educational and economic well-being of each city.

These exchanges have allowed hundreds of children and adults to have "once in a life time experiences" and to build friendships that span the Pacific Ocean, contributing to peace and prosperity by transcending cultural diversities through realizing our similarities and understanding our cultural differences.

The citizenry of Fujishiro-machi have provided vision, leadership and countless hours of volunteer time furthering the Sister City Relationship, providing significant cultural benefits not only to the Yuba City delegations, but also for the people of Fujishiro.

The International Friendship Association of Fujishiro was formed by involved citizens, businessmen and government leaders to promote the newly established Sister City Relationship between the two communities. I rise to recognize just a few:

Yasuo Kobayashi-san, Mayor of Fujishiro, has provided leadership through personal and civic involvement and pursuit to the goals of our Sister City Relationship. He has accompanied a number of delegations from Fujishiro-machi to Yuba City. His achievements in furthering the Sister City bond have awarded him great respect throughout the community in Yuba City.

Mamoru Sakamoto-san, President of the International Friendship Association of Fujishiro and former President of the Fujishiro Town Council, is recognized for his personal and civic involvement in pursuit of the goals of the Sister City relationship.

Yukio Takegasa-san, Secretary General of the International Friendship Association and a rice farmer, became acquainted with Sutter County as an exchange student and assured the success of the sister city relationship. Today, involved in international trade, he continues to frequent the Yuba City area many times a year.

Shin Kawaguchi-san, former president of the International Friendship Association of Fujishiro is recognized for his personal involvement and relentless pursuit of the goals of our Sister City Relationship by being awarded the honor of "Honorary Citizen" of Yuba City.

And lastly, it is fitting to pay tribute to Hisao Yoshida, the late mayor of Fujishiro, for his vision and leadership in the search for a sister city relationship. He accompanied early delegations from Fujishiro-machi to Yuba City to experience our lifestyle and build everlasting friendships.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating the citizens of Yuba City, CA and Fujishiro, Japan, on their tenth anniversary as sister cities. I extend my best wishes to both cities as they celebrate the happy occasion this month in Japan, and wish them many more years of friendship, cooperation, and cultural exchange.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TRINI-
DAD TROJANS FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in recognition of a group of young athletes from the Fifth Congressional District for an outstanding year in athletic achievement. On Saturday, December 12, 1998, the Trinidad Trojans became the first Henderson County high school football team to gain a state football championship in any division, by winning the six-man state championship game. This team of exceptional young athletes displayed the determination and tenacity required to achieve a perfect season by finishing the year with an unblemished record of 15-0.

I would also like to recognize the Trojans' Coach, Kevin Ray for guiding these young men through training, practice and each test

they met on the gridiron. The lessons that we learn from our High School Coaches apply throughout our lives and will resonate with Coach Ray's players for years to come. Thank you Coach Ray for your leadership and for preparing these players to achieve such monumental goals. I wish you luck in the 1999 season and Godspeed to your graduating seniors. Way to go Trojans!

INTRODUCING THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA \$5,000 HOMEBUYER
CREDIT ACT OF 1999

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have chosen today to introduce the District of Columbia \$5,000 Homebuyer Credit Act of 1999, a permanent version of my \$5,000 homebuyer credit, because Franklin Raines and the Fannie Mae have significantly increased the credit's value to D.C. residents by monetizing the \$5,000 credit. This means that D.C. residents will be able to convert the \$5,000 homebuyer credit to cash to help make the down payment on a house. The credit alone will be the down payment on a \$100,000 house in the District. As a result, for a \$100,000 house, no down payment will be necessary.

I am pleased that the President has already agreed to a one-year extension of the credit in his budget, and I am hopeful that Congress will approve this extension. The President acted because, like the Congress, he realizes that if the District is to regain permanent solvency, there is no substitute for rapidly increasing the number of residents. The indispensable increase in the home sales we are seeing in the city today cannot continue without a stable incentive that will be here for the foreseeable future. The tax base loss has been so devastating that the job before us is literally one of repopulation. The District has not yet regained a tax base sufficient to sustain the city. Its competitive position with the suburbs means it will not regain its tax base without very substantial incentives.

The \$5,000 homebuyer credit, limited by income, has proven itself as cheap way for the federal government to have a large effect on reviving the city. The credit has been significantly responsible for the phenomenal result that D.C. is now number one in home sales in the country. Home sales in the District increased an extraordinary 50% last year, "the fastest pace in the nation," according to a local analysis. We have gone from 14,206 homesales in 1997, when the credit was enacted, to 21,406 last year. We have come from a few years back when people couldn't sell to today, when people can't buy. This is why Fannie Mae's effort to increase the supply of affordable housing and to monetize the tax credit are so welcome.

The \$5,000 homebuyer credit, coupled with a rapid increase in housing stock and investment, are the best hope for increasing our population on a permanent basis. When people buy homes, they lay down roots and are less likely to flee. The District has already lost three times the population in this decade as the city lost during the entire 1980s, and D.C. is still losing population. The credit helped